

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/886,747

Examiner

Amee A. Shah

Applicant(s)

AL-AZZAWE, ABDUL HAMID

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to RCE of 6/12/07 and Ex. Amdt. of 8/15/07.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1, 13 and 35.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

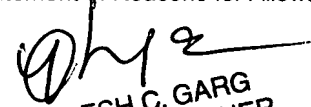
Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date 8/14/07.
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____


YOGESH C. GARG
PRIMARY EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment regarding the claims was given in a telephone interview with Joseph Acayan on August 14, 2007.

The application has been amended as follows:

In the Claims:

Claim 1. (Currently amended) A method for providing a business-to-business network service for applications used by service providers, the method comprising:

providing a central application capable of communicating with at least two rental applications over a public network;

providing a repository database for storing customer information that spans more than one of the service providers, wherein the service providers provide video rental services, wherein each service provider registers as clients with the central application through the at least two rental applications, and wherein the customer information comprises one or more of a list of business customers, a customer wish list, customer rental history, and customer evaluations;

receiving different customer information from each of the rental applications;

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storing the customer information in XML format, and communicating between the rental applications and the network service using XML messages;

aggregating the customer information across the service providers;

allowing the rental applications to query the repository database through the central application, thereby making the customer information accessible to each of the rental applications, wherein the central application communicates via Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) servlets or in Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP) envelopes;

analyzing the customer information data in the repository database to uncover patterns and relationships relating to the customers' rental activities and histories, wherein the repository database includes a first component for storing information regarding each of the service providers, a second component for storing information regarding each of the rental customers, and a third component for storing data that describes movie titles;

returning, in response to the queries, one or more of a recommended list, an order list, a user rating list, and a list of user infractions based on the analyzed customer information;

storing movie title information in the repository database, wherein the movie title information comprises movie title information from movie distributors;

making the movie title information accessible by the rental applications, and wherein making the movie title information accessible by the rental applications eliminates a need to manually enter information at the rental stores; and

in response to a user accessing the repository database:

displaying a list of movie titles to a user based on the analyzed customer information;

displaying a combination of indicators from among a group comprising an in stock or out of stock indicator, an already rented/purchased indicator, an order command, an add to wish-list command, and an add to shopping cart command based on the analyzed customer information, and wherein the customer information includes customer historical data ~~is used to display the indicators~~; and

displaying the combination of indicators adjacent to each movie title on the list to allow the user to take action with respect to a particular movie title, wherein a click on an indicator initiates a corresponding action, wherein the user is enabled to take the action on a same movie title page that displays the list of movie titles without having to navigate to a separate movie title page in order to take the action, ~~and wherein there is no direct customer interaction with the central application.~~

Claim 13. (Currently amended) A system for providing a network service for applications used by service providers comprising:

a central computer having a central application capable of communicating with at least two rental applications over a public network; ~~and~~

at least two service provider computers;

a network that connects the central computer with the at least two server provider computers; and

a repository database residing at the central computer for storing customer information that spans more than one of the service providers, wherein the service providers provide video rental services, wherein each service provider registers as clients with the central application

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through the at least two rental applications, wherein the customer information comprises one or more of a list of business customers, a customer wish list, customer rental history, and customer evaluations, wherein the central application stores the customer information in XML format, and communicating between the rental applications and the network service using XML messages, and wherein the repository database receives different customer information from each of the rental applications, wherein the central application is operable to aggregate the customer information across the service providers, wherein the central application communicates via Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) servlets or in Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP) envelopes, wherein the rental applications may query the repository database through the central application, thereby making the customer information accessible to each of the rental applications, wherein the central application analyzes the customer information in the repository database to uncover patterns and relationships relating to the customers' rental activities and histories, and wherein the central application returns, in response to the queries, one or more of a recommended list, an order list, a user rating list, and a list of user infractions based on the analyzed customer information, wherein the repository database includes a first component for storing information regarding each of the service providers, a second component for storing information regarding each of the rental customers, and a third component for storing data that describes movie titles, wherein the central application stores movie title information in the repository database, wherein the movie title information comprises movie title information from movie distributors, wherein the central application stores makes the movie title information accessible by the rental applications, wherein making the movie title information accessible by the rental applications eliminates a need to manually enter information at the rental stores,

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wherein in response to a user accessing the repository database, the central application displays a list of movie titles to a user based on the analyzed customer information, wherein, in further response to the user accessing the repository database, the central application displays a combination of indicators from among a group comprising an in stock or out of stock indicator, an already rented/purchased indicator, an order command, an add to wish-list command, and an add to shopping cart command based on the analyzed customer information, wherein the customer information includes customer historical data, and wherein, in further response to a user accessing the repository database, the central application displays the combination of indicators adjacent to each movie title on the list that allow the user to take action with respect to a particular movie title, wherein a click on an indicator initiates a corresponding action, wherein the user is enabled to take the action on a same movie title page that displays the list of movie titles without having to navigate to a separate movie title page in order to take the action, ~~and wherein there is no direct customer interaction with the central application.~~

Claim 35. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium containing executable program instructions for providing a business-to-business network service for rental applications used by rental chains, the program instructions for:

(a)——providing a central application capable of communicating with at least two rental ~~chain~~ applications over a public network;

(b)——providing a repository database for storing customer information that spans more than one of the rental chains, wherein each rental chain registers as clients with the central application through the at least two rental applications, and wherein the customer information

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comprises one or more of a list of business customers, a customer wish list, customer rental history, and customer evaluations;

storing the customer information in XML format, and communicating between the rental applications and the network service using XML messages;

receiving different customer information from each of the rental applications;

aggregating the customer information across the service providers;

allowing the rental ~~chain~~ applications to query the repository database through the central application, thereby making the customer information accessible to each of the rental ~~chain~~ applications, wherein the central application communicates via Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) servlets or in Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP) envelopes;

analyzing the customer information in the repository database to uncover patterns and relationships relating to the customers' rental activities and histories, wherein the repository database includes a first component for storing information regarding each of the service providers, a second component for storing information regarding each of the rental customers, and a third component for storing data that describes movie titles;

returning, in response to the queries, one or more of a recommended list, an order list, a user rating list, and a list of user infractions based on the analyzed customer information;

storing movie title information in the repository database, wherein the movie title information comprises movie title information from movie distributors;

making the movie title information accessible by the rental applications, wherein making the movie title information accessible by the rental applications eliminates a need to manually enter information at the rental stores;

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in response to a user accessing the repository database:

displaying a list of movie titles to a user based on the analyzed customer information;

displaying a combination of indicators from among a group comprising an in stock or out of stock indicator, an already rented/purchased indicator, an order command, an add to wish-list command, and an add to shopping cart command based on the analyzed customer information, wherein the customer information includes customer historical data; and

displaying the combination of indicators adjacent to each movie title on the list that allow the user to take action with respect to a particular movie title, wherein a click on an indicator initiates a corresponding action, wherein the user is enabled to take the action on a same movie title page that displays the list of movie titles without having to navigate to a separate movie title page in order to take the action, ~~and wherein there is no direct customer interaction with the central application.~~

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

Claims 1, 13 and 35 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Claim 1.

The prior art of record neither anticipates nor fairly and reasonably teaches the combination of steps and elements of the method of claim 1 for providing a business-to-business network service comprising providing a central application capable of communicating with at

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least two rental applications over a public network; providing a repository database for storing customer information that spans more than one of the service providers, wherein the service providers provide video rental services, wherein each service provider registers as clients with the central application through the at least two rental applications, and *wherein the customer information comprises one or more of a list of business customers, a customer wish list, customer rental history, and customer evaluations*; receiving different customer information from each of the rental applications; *storing the customer information in XML format*, and communicating between the rental applications and the network service using XML messages; aggregating the customer information across the service providers; allowing the rental applications to query the repository database through the central application, thereby making the customer information accessible to each of the rental applications, wherein the central application communicates via Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) servlets or in Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP) envelopes; analyzing the customer information in the repository database to uncover patterns and relationships relating to the customers' rental activities and histories, wherein the repository database includes a first component for storing information regarding each of the service providers, a second component for storing information regarding each of the rental customers, and a third component for storing data that describes movie titles; *returning, in response to the queries, one or more of a recommended list, an order list, a user rating list, and a list of user infractions based on the analyzed customer information*; storing movie title information in the repository database, wherein the movie title information comprises movie title information from movie distributors; making the movie title information accessible by the rental applications, and wherein making the movie title information accessible by the

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rental applications eliminates a need to manually enter information at the rental stores; and *in response to a user accessing the repository database*: displaying a list of movie titles to a user based on the analyzed customer information; displaying a combination of indicators from among a group comprising an in stock or out of stock indicator, an already rented/purchased indicator, an order command, an add to wish-list command, and an add to shopping cart command based on the analyzed customer information, and wherein the customer information includes customer historical data; and displaying the combination of indicators adjacent to each movie title on the list to allow the user to take action with respect to a particular movie title, wherein a click on an indicator initiates a corresponding action, *wherein the user is enabled to take the action on a same movie title page that displays the list of movie titles without having to navigate to a separate movie title page in order to take the action.*

The most remarkable prior art are as follows:

Kawecki et al., US 5,963,625 (hereafter referred to as “Kawecki”), discussed in the previous office actions, teaches a method for providing service providers access to a shared database (*see, e.g.*, col. 3, line 36 through col. 4, line 44) involving service providers sharing their customer knowledge and accumulating a shared database of data related to the customers, the service providers, products and services, for example for billing and credit concerns. Kawecki’s method teaches providing a central application capable of communicating with at least two applications, i.e. service providers over a public network, envisioned as a phone network but which can also include the internet (col. 3, lines 36-40 and col. 6, lines 16-32);

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providing a repository database for storing customer information that spans more than one of the service providers (col. 3, lines 36-47), wherein service providers register as clients with the central application (col. 3, lines 39-47), and wherein the customer information comprises one or more of a list of business customers and customer evaluations (col. 3, lines 36-47, col. 6, lines 26-32, and col. 7, lines 25-36); receiving different customer information from each of the applications (col. 7, lines 25-36 and line 61 through col. 8, line 29); aggregating the customer information across the service providers (col. 3, lines 42-46 and col. 6, lines 26-32); and allowing the applications to query the repository database through the central application, thereby making the customer information accessible to each of the applications (col. 8, lines 29-31).

While Kaweckı envisioned using the Internet, Kaweckı does not teach the service providers providing video rental services, the customer information stored including customer rental history and wish lists, the central applications communicating via HTTP or SOAP, analyzing the customer information to uncover patterns and relationships, wherein the repository database further includes a first component for storing information regarding each of the service providers, a second component for storing information regarding each of the rental customers, and a third component for storing data that describes movie titles, returning, in response to the queries from the applications, lists based on the analyzed customer information, storing movie titles in the database, making the movie titles accessible by the applications, and, in response to a user accessing the database, displaying a list of movie titles based on the analyzed customer information, displaying a list of indicators based on the analyzed customer information and

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displaying the indicators adjacent to the movie titles so that the user can take action on the same page. These deficiencies are not completely cured by other prior art.

The prior art Sherr et al., US 2002/0154157 A1 (hereafter referred to as “Sherr”), discussed in the prior office actions, teaches a method for simulating the look and feel of a video rental store by providing user access to an online catalog displayed on a main website (see Abstract). The method of Sherr teaches analyzing customer rental activities and histories to recommend movies (¶¶0060 and 0073), storing movie title information in a database (¶¶0040 and 0049), and in response to a user accessing the database, displaying a list of movie titles based on the analyzed customer information (¶0073), displaying indicators adjacent to each movie title on the list that allow the user to take action with respect to a particular movie title by opening a new window or new page (Figs. 2 and 5-10 and ¶0075), and displaying a combination of indicators from among a group comprising an in stock or out of stock indicator (Fig. 2 and ¶0066), an already rented/purchased indicator (Figs. 2 and 14), an order command (Fig. 2), an add to wish-list command (Fig. 2 and ¶¶0079-0080), and an add to shopping cart command (Fig. 2 and ¶0095), providing icons as the indicators, wherein a click on the icon initiates a corresponding action (Figs. 2 and 5-10 and ¶0066).

However, Sherr does not teach the central applications communicating via HTTP or SOAP, making the movie titles accessible by the applications, and in response to the queries from the applications, returning lists based on the analyzed customer information, and displaying the indicators so that the user can take action on the same page. These deficiencies are not completely cured by other prior art.

The prior art Forth et al., US 6,853,978 B2 (hereinafter referred to as “Forth”), discussed in previous office actions, teaches a method of ordering devices including wherein the protocol of the network service is HTTP (col. 5, lines 26-32) and wherein the central application communicates with the applications using XML messages contained in Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP) envelopes (col. 11, lines 41-48). However, Forth does not cure the other deficiencies in the prior art.

Claim 13

Claim 13 recites an article of manufacture of a system for providing a network service for applications used by the service providers. The system comprises of a central computer with a central application, at least two service provider computers, a network connecting the computers and a repository database on the central consistent with and parallel to the functionalities and limitations of claim 1. This article of manufacture is allowable over the prior art for reasons consistent with those identified above with respect to claim 1.

Claim 35.

Claim 35 recites an article of manufacture of a computer-readable medium contracting executable program instructions for providing business-to-business network service for rental applications. The medium when executed by a computer causes the computer to perform instructions that are consistent with and parallel to the functionalities and limitations of claim 1.

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This article of manufacture is allowable over the prior art for reasons consistent with those identified above with response to claim 1.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

EXAMINER'S COMMENTS

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on June 12, 2007, has been entered.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ameer A. Shah whose telephone number is 571-272-8116. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Fri. 7:00 am - 3:30 pm.


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jeffrey A. Smith can be reached on 571-272-6763. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

AAS

August 15, 2007


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